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**STATE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
JUSTICE AGREE ON ENHANCEMENT PLAN FOR STATE HOSPITALS**

SACRAMENTO – A collaborative agreement was reached today regarding specific improvements to be undertaken at California's state mental hospitals by the California Department of Mental Health (DMH) and United States Department of Justice (USDOJ).

Dr. Stephen Mayberg, Director of the Department of Mental Health, called the plan "a comprehensive set of enhancements that will continue to move our state hospitals toward improved treatment and patient care while providing patients and staff with a safer environment."

Mayberg noted that the plan builds on many of the changes that are already under implementation at the hospitals. "We are moving toward a wholly improved system that will reflect a continued reduction in the use of seclusion and restraint, a reduction of patient and staff assaults, a reduction in patient suicides, speedier resolution of investigations of abuse, shorter lengths of stay in state hospitals, improved physical health and dietary planning among patients, and better defined clinical performance measures."

USDOJ officials lauded DMH's effort in its stipulation to the court, noting that the department "voluntarily undertook initiatives to address outstanding concerns with regard to the protections, services, and supports provided at the State Hospitals [and that] California and its officials have acted in good faith and have voluntarily undertaken significant measures to enhance confinement, care, treatment, and rehabilitation for patients."

The enhancement plan was the result of lengthy discussions and negotiations with the USDOJ, which began an investigation at Metropolitan State Hospital in 2002 and initiated subsequent investigations at Atascadero, Napa and Patton State Hospitals. A fifth state hospital, Coalinga, opened in September 2005 and was not included in the review but will also implement the changes outlined in the enhancement plan.

The five hospitals in California offer a broad range of diagnostic, treatment, habilitation and rehabilitation services to more than 4,700 individuals who have been referred to the facility under a civil commitment or through the courts on a forensic commitment.

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